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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Federated States of, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Brtain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe: draft resolution

Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

The General Assembly,

Recalling that all States have pledged themselves to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing that these rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person,

Reaffirming that discrimination against human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming its resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, by which it proclaimed the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Recalling its resolution 46/131 of 17 December 1991, in which it requested the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolution 1992/17 of 21 February 1992 and Economic and Social Council decision 1992/226 of 20 July 1992, by which the mandate of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures, as appropriate, was extended for three years,

Recognizing that it is desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and that both Governments and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play in this domain,

Emphasizing that non-governmental organizations and religious bodies and groups at every level have an important role to play in the promotion of tolerance and the protection of freedom of religion or belief,

Conscious of the importance of education in ensuring tolerance of religion and belief,

Alarmed that serious instances, including acts of violence, intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief occur in many parts of the world, as evidenced in the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Angelo Vidal d'Almeida Ribeiro, 1/

Believing that further efforts are therefore required to promote and protect the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and to eliminate all forms of hatred, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief;

1. Reaffirms that freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief is a human right derived from the inherent dignity of the human person and guaranteed to all without discrimination;

2. Urges States to ensure that their constitutional and legal systems provide adequate guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, including the provision of effective remedies where there is intolerance or discrimination based on religion or belief;

1/ E/CN.4/1992/52.

3. Recognizes that legislation alone is not enough to prevent violations of human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief;

4. Urges all States therefore to take all appropriate measures to combat hatred, intolerance and acts of violence and to encourage understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief;

5. Also urges States to ensure that, in the course of their official duties, members of law enforcement bodies, civil servants, educators and other public officials respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons professing other religions or beliefs;

6. Calls upon all States to recognize, as provided in the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the right of all persons to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes;

7. Also calls upon all States in accordance with their national legislation to exert utmost efforts to ensure that religious places and shrines are fully respected and protected;

8. Considers it desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to this end in the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;

9. Invites the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to the dissemination of the text of the Declaration, in all the official languages of the United Nations, and to take all appropriate measures to make the text available for use by United Nations information centres, as well as by other interested bodies;

10. Encourages the continued efforts on the part of the Special Rapporteur appointed to examine incidents and governmental actions in all parts of the world that are incompatible with the provisions of the Declaration and to recommend remedial measures as appropriate;

11. Encourages Governments to give serious consideration to inviting the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries so as to enable him to fulfil his mandate even more effectively;

12. Recommends that the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion be given appropriate priority in the work of the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, with regard to, inter alia, the drafting of basic legal texts in conformity with international instruments on human rights and taking into account the provisions of the Declaration;

13. Encourages the Human Rights Committee to give priority to its announced intention to prepare a general comment on article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 2/ dealing with freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

14. Welcomes the efforts of non-governmental organizations to promote the implementation of the Declaration;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to invite interested non-governmental organizations to consider what further role they could envisage playing in the implementation of the Declaration and in the dissemination of its text in national and local languages;

16. Urges all States to consider disseminating the text of the Declaration in their respective national languages and to facilitate its dissemination in national and local languages;

17. Requests the Commission on Human Rights to continue its consideration of measures to implement the Declaration;

18. Decides to consider the question of the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance at its forty-eighth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.